



JOANNA LIN — THE TECH

Snow melts outside the entrance of the Broad Institute Jan. 27.

Spring semester to proceed as planned

Off-campus seniors near MIT may request access to on-campus facilities

By Kristina Chen
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart PhD '88 wrote that the spring semester move-in and in-person instruction start dates would not be delayed in an email to undergraduates Jan. 22. Barnhart previously outlined contingency plans that would delay these dates in a Jan. 15 email.

MIT will proceed with the original Feb. 13–15 move-in dates. The first day of in-person instruction will be March 1, also as planned.

The decision came after “seeking advice from public health experts and consulting with our Covid-19 Monitoring and Decision teams,” who said delaying the dates “would likely not reduce risk significantly.”

Barnhart also wrote that MIT Medical will mail a pre-departure COVID-19 testing kit to eligible undergraduates in the U.S. The goal of the program is to identify students who test positive “before they depart so that they can isolate and recover prior to traveling to campus.”

An information session on the Spring was held for students and

families Jan. 27 with Barnhart, Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz, Vice President and Dean for Student Life Suzy Nelson present, along with other student and Institute leaders.

In an email to undergraduates Dec. 14, Barnhart wrote that seniors living near MIT would be able to request access to campus in the spring for “research and academic activities such as thesis work, UROPs, and in-person instruction required for degree completion.”

Seniors may request access through thesis, research, or department advisors, who will then work

with the Office of the Vice Chancellor to assess and approve requests. Once approved for access, seniors will be issued Covid Pass and will be required to maintain twice-a-week testing and daily health attestation.

Barnhart explained that the exception for seniors was “informed by the fact that, to date, we have seen no transmission of the virus on campus in classroom or laboratory settings,” and by how MIT’s “testing, contact tracing, and student support systems withstood” the uptick in cases experienced by MIT in November.

IN SHORT

Undergraduates returning to campus should register to receive **pre-departure COVID-19 testing kits**.

Students living in the Boston area may receive **one COVID-19 test per week** at MIT Medical.

Independent Activities Period concludes on Jan. 29.

Interested in **joining The Tech**? Email join@tech.mit.edu.

Send news and tips to news@tech.mit.edu.

Full Spring grading policy announced, students can choose to grade one subject under emergency PE/NE

Sophomore Exploratory and Junior-Senior P/D/F, Graduate P/D/F options are also available

By Shelley Choi
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

Chair of MIT Faculty Rick Danheiser and the Academic Policy and Regulations Team (APART) announced the full grading policy for Spring 2021 in an email to the MIT community Jan. 21. Both undergraduate and graduate subjects will be graded on an A, B, C, D/NE, F/NE basis, with the exception of D/NR and F/NR for first years.

No academic credit can be received for D/NE/NR and F/NE/NR.

Sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduate students can, however, accept a grade of D to “fulfill a requirement for graduation.”

A letter grading system was designed with “extra flexibility” due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like Fall 2020, all students can elect one subject to be graded as PE/NE by Drop Date April 29. Sophomores may additionally designate one subject as Exploratory, then either accept the letter grade awarded or change the class to listener status. Junior-Senior P/D/F option and

Graduate P/D/F option are also available, though they cannot be used to fulfill departmental and Institute requirements.

The Emergency Academic Regulations and Recommendations contain three sections: Class Meetings and General Regulations; Scheduling of Classes and Midterm Exams; and End-of-Term Assignments, Final Exams, and Theses.

All instruction must be “delivered remotely during the first two weeks” from Feb. 16 to 26. Several three- and four-day breaks have been scheduled

throughout the semester to compensate for the elimination of Spring Break: March 6–8, March 20–23, April 17–20, and May 7–9. “No required meetings may be held and no assignments may be due” during these days.

Instructors are encouraged to announce if their classes require attendance in advance of Registration Week Feb. 8–12, as well as to “survey their classes” to identify students in “remote time zones” in order to accordingly schedule recitation sections and office hours. Instructors are further advised not to “utilize third-

party online proctoring” for exams unless “all other options have been exhausted.”

For subjects with final exams, no assignments can be due and no tests can be held after the “last test date,” May 14. For those without final exams, the deadline for assignments “due the last week of classes” is on the last day of classes, May 20. An *ex camera* final examination may be held with the permission of the Chair of the Faculty. Students should be permitted “unrestricted use of resources” in these exams.

YEAR OF COVID

A documentary on the administration and lies that got us here. **ARTS, p. 3**

HACKER LOVE

A perfect K-drama to “start up” for the tech and romance enthused. **ARTS, p. 3**

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WEATHER

Storms ahead

By Maria
Geogdzhayeva and
Renbin Liu

As IAP comes to a close, Boston is expected to see some snow in the next few days, with the temperatures dropping towards the weekend. Watch out for the wind chill on Friday. Get out your best gloves and mittens, maybe find a spare carrot, and try not to spend too much time outside – unless you're building a snowman.

The snow showers may have folks excited in the Boston area, and the storm in the West Coast

is bringing both excitement and anxiety to folks. Much of California's cumulative precipitation so far is less than half of the average amount. This storm is the strongest one for much of Northern California so far this rain season and will bring helpful precipitation, but it has also raised concerns for areas with burned scars from the wildfire. Concentrated precipitation in a short period of time may lead to mudslides in these local regions and have resulted in evacuation orders of which people are reluctant to comply.

Extended Forecast

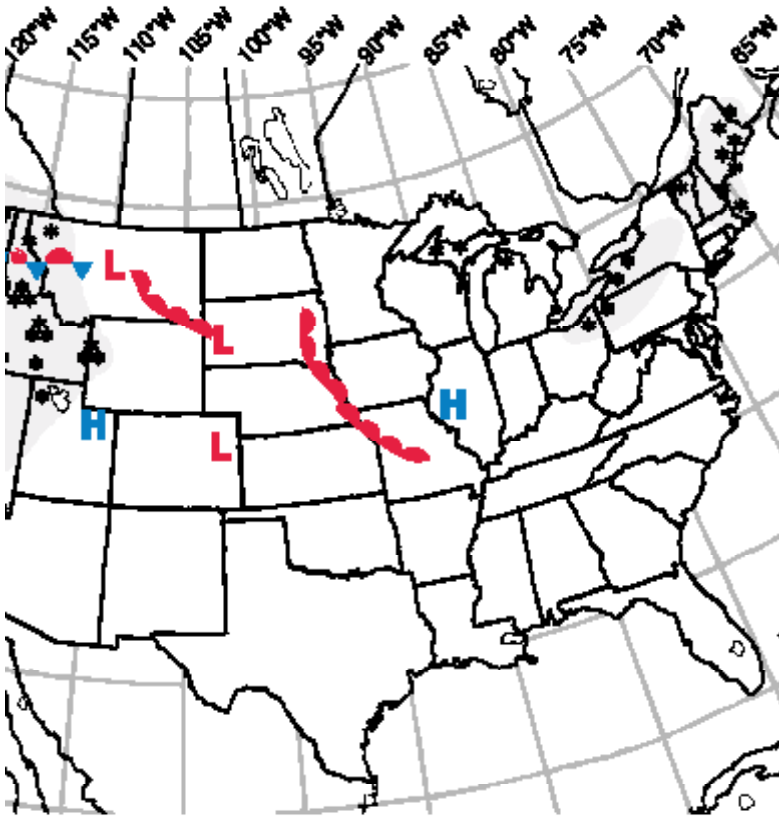
Today: Chance of snow showers. High near 32°F (0°C). Northwest winds around 9-14 mph.

Tonight: Partly cloudy. Low around 12°F (-11°C). Northwest winds around 14-16 mph.

Tomorrow: AM snow showers possible. High near 19°F (-7°C). Low around 10°F (-12°C). Northwest wind around 18 mph.

Saturday: Sunny. High near 23°F (-5°C). Low around 12°F (-11°C). Northwest winds around 7-13 mph.

Sunday: Mostly sunny. High near 30°F (-1°C). Low around 22°F (-6°C). Northeast winds 5-8 mph.



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, January 28, 2021

Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols	Other Symbols
H High Pressure	— — — Trough	Snow in Snow	☁ Fog
L Low Pressure	— Warm Front	Light * Moderate *** Heavy ***	⚡ Thunderstorm
☃ Winter	▲ Cold Front		☁ Rain
	▲ Stationary Front		
			Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and The Tech

Prowl Around Campus.
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Solution to drivers

from page 4

3	9	1	2	4	7	5	6	8
6	8	4	9	5	3	2	7	1
5	7	2	6	1	8	9	4	3
9	4	6	7	8	2	1	3	5
8	2	7	5	3	1	4	9	6
1	3	5	4	9	6	7	8	2
7	1	8	3	2	4	6	5	9
4	5	3	1	6	9	8	2	7
2	6	9	8	7	5	3	1	4

Solution to Skin

from page 4

1	3	4	5	6	2
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4	6	1	2	3	5
3	5	6	1	2	4
5	1	2	3	4	6
2	4	5	6	1	3

Solution to Louder

from page 4

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W	A	T	E	R	C	O	O	L	E	R	T	A	L
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P	A	P	A	Y	A		D	U	E		E	R	I
G	L	U	T	E	N		A	R	C		A	G	R
A	L	B	E	R	T		M	E	T		L	Y	E

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fellow tech staff.
(aka, your new 3 a.m.
pset support group)



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TV REVIEW

***Start-Up* delivers big heart and big data**

Silicon Valley meets second lead syndrome in Netflix K-drama

By Gloria Lin and Levi Villarreal

Start-Up is the crossover you didn't know you needed: a Korean drama series about young entrepreneurs struggling to follow their dreams — and their hearts — in the cutthroat world of tech startups and venture capital. The series follows savvy visionary Seo Dal-mi (Bae Suzy) and genius programmer Nam Do-san (Nam Joo-hyuk) on their journey to found a successful machine learning startup, under the guidance of shrewd investor Han Ji-pyeong (Kim Seon-ho). In addition to the typical challenges faced by entrepreneurs of early-stage startups, Dal-mi and Do-san find formidable competition in the startup of Won In Jae (Kang Han-na), Dal-mi's estranged sister. What makes *Start-Up* noteworthy is its realistic portrayal of tech startups, ability to tug at heartstrings, and thoughtful exploration of what it really means to "follow your dream." However, the series is punctuated by an overwhelming romance and strong second lead syndrome.

First, it is clear that when the producers of *Start-Up* set out to make a show about the world of venture capital and tech start-ups, they did their research. The technical aspects of the series are more believable and detail-oriented than one might expect from a K-drama. The show revolves around Samsan Tech, a start-up consisting of three ragtag but talented developers. Under the guidance of a new CEO, Seo Dal-mi, Samsan Tech wins a hackathon to earn a coveted acceptance into the start-up accelerator Sandbox. As Samsan Tech grows, the company endures many real-world problems faced by founders of early-stage start-ups, such as cutthroat competition, predatory investors, and forced reconciliation of profit versus purpose. The show even ventures into heavier territory, showing that most start-ups are unsuccessful and can destroy friendships, lives, and families.

Start-Up also does a commendable job of making the technology used seem realistic. The show explains machine learning (ML) ideas and terminology to the audience using entertaining analogies. For example, Nam Do-san uses the idea of Tarzan learning Jane's preferences to explain the

concept of ML to Seo Dal-mi. Moreover, the broad applications of ML portrayed in *Start-Up* are areas of active research and industrial interest today, such as object recognition and autonomous vehicles. More notably, *Start-Up* alludes to actual technology suitable for these ML applications. In some scenes, there are close-up shots of computer vision starter code on the developers' screens and presentations containing diagrams of legitimate neural network architectures. This attention to detail shows that actual engineers were consulted in the production of *Start-Up*, bolstering the show's authenticity and leaving some viewers learning more about ML than they expected.

Furthermore, the well-written character arcs in *Start-Up* hit refreshingly close to home, and the emphasis on self-discovery and growth led me to ask myself the same question as the characters on-screen: “what is my dream?” To be specific, each of the main characters begins the series with naive but passionate motivations to start (or help start) a company. As their companies mature, the characters are faced with challenges that make them consider giving up. Instead, these hardships strengthen their resolve, and their dreams evolve along with their start-ups. Through working together as engineers, designers, and mentors, the characters are able to realize their underlying motivations, which may be vastly different from their original goals.

On top of that, what the series lacks in romance, it more than compensates for in familial love, blood relation or otherwise. I don't cry often, but *Start-Up* had me bawling in just the first two episodes. In particular, Seo Dal-mi's complicated family history and Han Ji-pyeong's upbringing as an orphan offer ample tearjerker material. Many of the show's familial relationships revolve around Seo Dal-mi's halmeoni (Korean for grandmother), a caring, hardworking woman who played a large part in raising Seo Dal-mi and Han Ji-pyeong. *Start-Up* also excels in portraying the bonds among Samsan Tech team members as they face the highs and lows and risks and rewards of entrepreneurship together. Compelling performances

and screenwriting help audiences feel like they're right there with the characters, struggling to build something meaningful and secure funding under the constant pressure of failure.

There were, however, moments of *Start-Up* which were uncomfortable to watch for the wrong reasons. For example, the show normalizes workplace harassment in the relationship between Samsan Tech developer Lee Chul-san and designer Jeong Sa-ha. Chul-san's persistent, unwelcome romantic advances on Sa-ha are trivialized as comedic relief, and he doggedly continues to pursue Sa-ha in the office, despite numerous rejections. Another instance where harassment is romanticized is Do-san's decision to follow Dal-mi and wait outside her house after their breakup. This troubling behavior is portrayed not as stalking, but rather as an earnest romantic interest. Both interactions send the disturbing message that people shouldn't take no for an answer. This problematic writing is not unique to *Start-Up*, but worth noting.

Speaking of problems with romance in *Start-Up*, any review of the drama would be incomplete without addressing its central love triangle. K-dramas are no stranger to love triangles, and one of the most defining features of *Start-Up* is its unusually strong case of Second Lead Syndrome (SLS), K-drama jargon for the condition where fans root for the main character to end up with the second lead rather than with the main love interest. In the case of *Start-Up*, the show's SLS has motivated a myriad of essays on Reddit and other online forums about how Seo Dal-mi should have ended up with Han Ji-pyeong rather than Nam Do-san. The unexpected popularity of second lead Han Ji-pyeong could be attributed to the script and actor Kim Seon-ho's performance, and depending on whether you affiliate with #TeamNDS or #TeamHJP, SLS in *Start-Up* can make the show frustrating to watch.

Dubbed as “Good Boy” by Halmioni, Han Ji-pyeong is a well-written, highly empathizable character who is able to overcome his flaws and grow into a better person over the course of the series. This dynamism is complemented by Kim Seon-

★★★★☆

Start-Up

Directed by Oh Choong-hwan

Written by Park Hye-ryun

Starring Bae Suzy, Nam Joo-hyuk, Kim Seon-ho, Kang Han-na

Streaming on Netflix

ho's acting, leading to a massive rise in the actor's popularity following *Start-Up*'s debut. On the other hand, Nam Do-san is a relatively static character whose adversities and growth pale in comparison to Ji-pyeong's. The "romance" between Do-san and Dal-mi is initially contrived, superficial, and built on lies, casting a shadow on the rest of their relationship and helping build a case for SLS. An even more convincing argument for SLS is that unlike Do-san, Ji-pyeong has history with Dal-mi as childhood pen pals. The letters they exchanged become a catalyst and focal point for the show's events.

All in all, *Start-Up* is a heartwarming K-drama colored by the exciting world of venture capital and tech start-ups. Throughout this series, viewers may find themselves laughing out loud at Samsan Tech's antics, crying along with Han Ji-pyeong and Halmeoni, and holding their breath during a pitching competition. *Start-Up* is able to cleverly build up the team and family dynamics in a way that makes you root for their success. However, the unsatisfying conclusion to the show's romance may leave viewers unfulfilled. This drama is able to capture the way that many feel early in their career, brimming with uncertainty matched by hope. And with all the uncertainty in the world right now, *Start-Up* offers the hope that our dreams are always within reach.

DOCUMENTARY REVIEW

Totally not under control

Totally Under Control brilliantly exposes why COVID-19 is not under control in the US

★★★★☆

Totally Under Control

Directed by Alex Gibney

Screenplay by Alex Gibney

Not Rated, Streaming on Hulu

By Liane Xu
ARTS EDITOR

ARTS EDITOR

In case you wanted to relive 2020, *Totally Under Control* is the documentary for you. All joking aside, director Alex Gibney's most recent documentary is a must-

watch, both because of the importance of the subject matter and because of the masterful filmmaking. As with all good documentaries, *Totally Under Control* is well researched and slickly incorporates interviews with informative graphics. What makes it stand out is its ability to pull you in and its incredible timeliness; it was filmed amidst the pandemic and released in October, less than a year after the events it describes.

As a warning, watching *Totally Under Control* is not necessarily a pleasant experience. You'll feel the urge to scream at your screen as Gibney leads you through all the ways the United States bungled its response to the coronavirus pandemic. In fact, you'll feel the urge to scream at one person in particular: Donald Trump. Yet for some reason, you can't look away.

This isn't to say that *Totally Under Control* is flawless. In a sense, its limits are a reflection of the very problems it exposes. Put simply, two hours is far from enough

to meticulously cover every failure in this pandemic because there are so many. In particular, Gibney chooses to focus on the Trump administration's negligence and lies. It's an effective choice, but the sheer magnitude of blunders and falsehoods means that other issues are only allotted a few minutes. Multiple topics that could easily use their own documentary — the economic fallout and the intersection between systemic racism and patient outcomes, for example — are almost glossed over.

Additionally, although the timeliness of the film is necessary to hold the Trump administration accountable, a documentary released last October cannot encompass a pandemic that is still raging. Admittedly, this may be unfair criticism: *Totally Under Control* is not meant to be the definitive documentary on every single thing that went wrong (and continues to go wrong) in the COVID-19 pandemic. If anything, *Totally Under Control* is incredibly self-

aware, almost frustratingly so; the film starts by showing their creative, COVID-safe camera setup and ends by mentioning that the day after the film was completed, Trump tested positive for COVID-19. There's no pretending that the crisis is behind us. Rather, there's a constant sense of the ongoing tragedy and unprecedented times. Perhaps unintentionally, the slight exasperation from seeing yet another shot of their camera-box or shower curtain contraption mirrors the frustration that this is now the norm because our government failed us.

Nonetheless, *Totally Under Control* does almost feel like an authoritative source on the first few months of the American government's response to COVID-19, which is a testament to its extensive interviews and Gibney's impressive filmmaking. Indeed, despite its shortcomings, *Totally Under Control* may well be a film that will be shown in schools in the future, and deservedly so.

DID YOUR MIT ESSAYS GET YOU IN?

The Tech is collecting successful application essays (**hint:** yours!).

Email your pieces to cl@tech.mit.edu!

Solution, page 2

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Louder, Please by Stella Zawistowski

ACROSS

- 1** Troop-entertaining grp.
- 4** Brew from a kettle
- 7** Stash cash for a purchase
- 13** Fort full of gold
- 14** Solo of Star Wars
- 15** Small streams
- 16** Orderly and neat
- 17** Nightclub performance
- 18** Fluffy brunch creation
- 19** Aside to an audience
- 22** Place to sleep
- 23** Danson of TV
- 24** Abbr. on a sunscreen bottle
- 27** Choral performances
- 29** Young boy
- 30** Nary a __ (no one)
- 31** ABA member
- 32** Legendary fable teller
- 34** Guy, familiarly
- 35** Chatter at the office
- 38** Map-filled tome
- 39** San __ (southern California city)
- 40** King: Sp.
- 41** Bird-feeder food

- 42 Dessert with a crust
43 Stuck together, as model airplane parts
45 "For ___ a jolly good . . ."
46 Target of an annual vaccine
47 Quaint place to stay
48 Therapeutic outburst
54 Melonlike tropical fruit
57 Needing to be paid
58 Lake near Niagara Falls
59 Protein in wheat
60 Eyebrow shape
61 City with the Taj Mahal
62 Professor Einstein
63 Encountered
64 Strong drain cleaner

- 1 Part of CPU or BTU
- 2 Recyclable two-liter containers
- 3 Scuba tank contents
- 4 Start to unfreeze
- 5 Apiece
- 6 "Opposed to" prefix
- 7 Investigated, with "out"
- 8 Activated, as an alarm

- 9** Swerve suddenly
- 10** Electrified fish
- 11** Luau instrument
- 12** L.A. winter clock setting
- 13** Gold purity measures:
Abbr.
- 20** Awards for mystery writing
- 21** Paper clip alternative
- 24** Power from sun panels
- 25** Tugged on
- 26** Crumbly, as puff pastry
- 27** Art on a pedestal
- 28** Brief moment, for short
- 29** Sarge's superior
- 30** Complete collection
- 31** Overflowing (with)
- 33** Element in table salt
- 34** Play merrily
- 36** Ingest
- 37** Humpty Dumpty, for one
- 42** Easily molded
- 44** Fanciful
- 46** Doughnut maker's
appliance
- 48** Top of the head
- 49** Abel's dad
- 50** Enticement

Solution, page 2

36x			60x		
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		36x			
75x				8x	24x
	24x				
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Louder, Please

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54	55	56					57				58			
59							60				61			
62							63				64			

- 51** Religious offshoot
52 Suffix for billion
53 "Give __ break!"
54 Org. with expert putters
55 100%
56 British tavern

**A WEBCOMIC OF ROMANCE,
SARCASM, MATH. AND LANGUAGE**
by Randall Munroe



Mmmm, this is such a positive experience! I feel no social pressure to enjoy it at all!